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The Preservation of Historical Material

B. F. S.

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A VALUABLE HISTORICAL DOCUMENT.

It will be remembered by our readers that we published in *THE ANNALS* for July, 1893, an article entitled "The Chain of Title to Iowa," which, aside from the editorial comment, was an original compilation of historical facts, by Mr. Frank E. Landers of Webster City. It presented in compact form a statement of the different jurisdictions which had asserted or exercised authority over the territory included within the boundaries of our State, from the days of Pope Alexander VI (1493), to the present time, including the dates of each. This paper, which cost the compiler months of laborious research, is included in the recently published census of this State, or it may be had separately by addressing the author. The information which it contains is in frequent request by teachers and writers, and it is for their benefit that we refer to it at this time.

THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL MATERIAL.

Most men seem incapable of perceiving the real differences between present and future goods: the values of future goods are too frequently underestimated. The future is constantly being sacrificed to the present. And nowhere is this general truth more clearly seen than in the study of history. Daily important historical material is being neglected, thrown away, destroyed, through failure to appreciate its future value. And daily are students of history deploring the results.

The preservation of historical material is a matter of public concern: for history is not individualistic; it is social. The collection, preservation and publication of historical data is now generally recognized as a proper function of government. But of few of the American Commonwealths can it be said that they have adequately provided for the exercise of this function. Historical societies and departments have been established; but few of them are at present

adequately provided with money, men and buildings. The beginnings made in Iowa are well made. Yet be it remembered that they are still beginnings, which await a fuller development.

B. F. S.

A SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION.—William Blair, who was born near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1760, died at Kossuth, Iowa, in 1840. He enlisted in 1778, and served under Gen. John Sullivan in the expedition against the Iroquois Indians in 1779. He was disabled in the battle of Chemung, but recovering his health served out that and a subsequent enlistment. His father and two brothers were also soldiers of the Revolution, enlisting "in the Pennsylvania line." He came to Iowa a year or two before his death and settled near the present site of the village of Kossuth, where he died. He was buried in "The Round Prairie burying ground," his grave being marked with his name and the dates of his birth and death. He was the grandfather of Mr. M. W. Blair, who resides at Kossuth.

AS ILLUSTRATING the errors incident to compilations, a strange one appears in the massive volumes of "State Constitutions, etc.," compiled by Ben. Perley Poore, 2d edition, published under an order of the U. S. Senate, 1878, in which the Iowa Constitution of 1857 is printed twice, and is called in the first place the "Constitution of Iowa—1846," pp. 536-567. *Errare est humanum.*

THE ANNALS is indebted to Rev. J. M. Chamberlain, of Grinnell, for the use of photographs from which the half-tone engravings were made to illustrate the interesting and valuable article of Mr. S. H. Herrick, on the destructive cyclone of June 17, 1882.

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